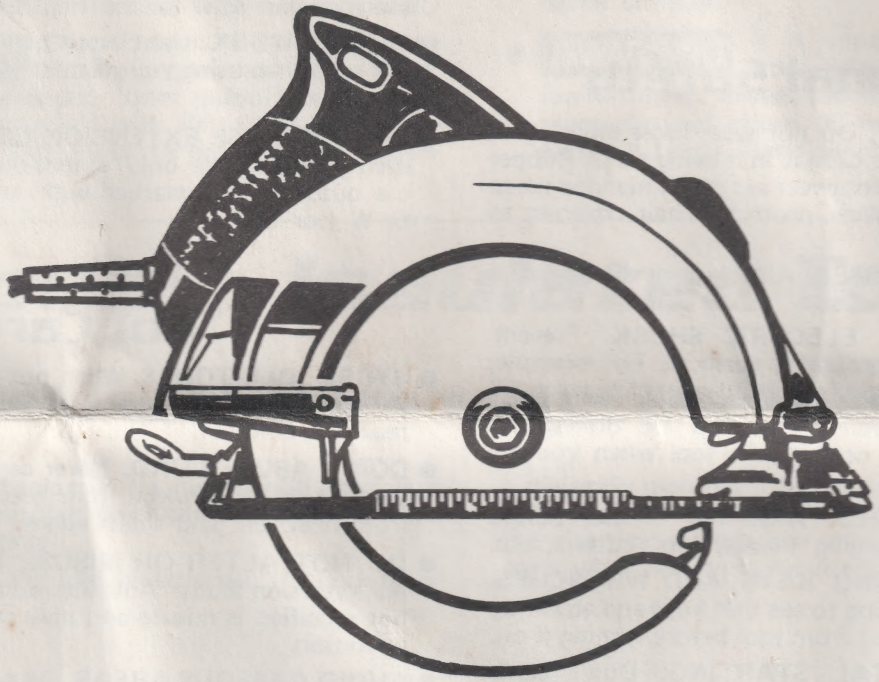
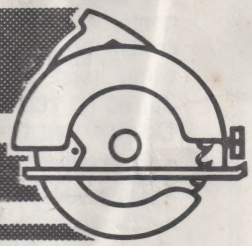
Master
MECHANIC®
Hand and Power Tools

Operating Guide

8550 Model CIRCULAR SAW



IMPORTANT: Read Before Using



SOLD EXCLUSIVELY BY True Value HARDWARE STORES CHICAGO, IL 60614

⚠WARNING "READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS" Failure to follow the SAFETY RULES listed BELOW, and other basic safety precautions, may result in serious personal injury.

General Safety Rules

Work Area

- **KEEP WORK AREAS CLEAN.** Cluttered areas and benches invite accidents.
- **AVOID DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT.** Don't use power tools in damp or wet locations. Keep work area well lit. Do not expose power tools to rain. Do not use tool in presence of flammable liquids or gases.
- **KEEP CHILDREN AWAY.** Do not let visitors contact tool or extension cord. All visitors should be kept away from work area.

Personal Safety

- **DRESS PROPERLY.** Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry. They can be caught in moving parts. Rubber gloves and non-skid footwear are recommended when working outdoors. Wear protective hair covering to contain long hair.
- **USE SAFETY GLASSES.** Also face or dust mask if cutting operation is dusty.
- **GUARD AGAINST ELECTRIC SHOCK.** Prevent body contact with grounded surfaces. For example; pipes, radiators, ranges, refrigerator enclosures.
- **STAY ALERT.** Watch what you are doing. Use common sense. Do not operate tool when you are tired.
- **DISCONNECT TOOLS.** When not in use; before servicing; when changing blades, bits, cutters, etc.
- **REMOVE ADJUSTING KEYS AND WRENCHES.** Form habit of checking to see that keys and adjusting wrenches are removed from tool before turning it on.
- **AVOID ACCIDENTAL STARTING.** Don't carry plugged in tool with finger on switch. Be sure switch is OFF when plugged in.
- **DON'T OVERREACH.** Keep proper footing and balance at all times.
- **CHECK DAMAGED PARTS.** Before further use of the tool, a guard or other part that is damaged should be carefully checked to determine that it will operate properly and perform its intended function. Check for alignment of moving parts, binding of moving parts, breakage of parts, mounting, and any other conditions that may affect its operation. A guard or other part that is damaged should be properly repaired or replaced. Have defective switches replaced. Do not use tool if switch does not turn it on or off.
- **⚠WARNING** All repairs, electrical or mechanical, should be attempted only by trained repairmen. Contact the nearest Skil Factory Service Center, or Authorized Skil Service Station or other competent repair service. Use only Skil replacement parts, any other may create a hazard.
- **⚠WARNING** The use of any other accessories not specified in this manual may create a hazard.

Tool Use

- **DON'T FORCE TOOL.** It will do the job better and safer at the rate for which it was designed.
- **USE THE RIGHT TOOL.** Don't force small tool or attachment to do the job of a heavy-duty tool. Don't use tool for purpose not intended—for example; don't use circular saw for cutting tree limbs or logs.
- **SECURE WORK.** Use clamps or a vise to hold work. It's safer than using your hand and it frees both hands to operate tool.
- **OUTDOOR USE EXTENSION CORDS.** When tool is used outdoors, use only extension cords suitable for use outdoors and marked with suffix W-A (for UL), or W (for CSA).

Tool Care

- **STORE IDLE TOOLS.** When not in use, tools should be stored in dry, high or locked up place—out of the reach of children.
- **DON'T ABUSE CORD.** Never carry tool by cord or yank it to disconnect from receptacle. Keep cord from heat, oil, and sharp edges.
- **DO NOT ALTER OR MISUSE TOOL.** These tools are precision built. Any alteration or modification not specified is misuse and may result in a dangerous condition.
- **AVOID GASEOUS AREAS.** Do not operate portable electric tools in gaseous or explosive atmospheres. Motors in these tools normally spark, and the sparks might ignite fumes.
- **MAINTAIN TOOLS WITH CARE.** Keep tools sharp and clean for better and safer performance. Follow instructions for lubricating and changing accessories. Inspect tool cords periodically and if damaged, have repaired by authorized service facility. Inspect extension cords periodically and replace if damaged. Keep handles dry, clean and free from oil and grease.
- **⚠WARNING** Before connecting the tool to a power source (receptacle, outlet, etc.) be sure the voltage supplied is the same as that specified on the nameplate of the tool. A power source with voltage greater than that specified for the tool can result in SERIOUS INJURY to the user—as well as damage to the tool. If in doubt, DO NOT PLUG IN THE TOOL. Using a power source with voltage less than the nameplate rating is harmful to the motor.

"SAVE THESE INSTRUCTIONS"

Tool Safety Rules

- Disconnect from power supply when not in use; before servicing; when changing blades, bits, cutters, etc.
- **CAUTION:** Do not use dull or damaged blades.
- **DANGER:** Keep hands away from cutting area and blades.
- Keep blade guards in place and in working order.
- Never clamp or tie the lower guard into the open position.
- Raise the lower guard only with the Retracting Handle or Lower Guard Lift Lever.
- Do not run the saw while carrying it at your side.
- Secure wood before sawing; never hold pieces for cutting in your hand or across your legs.
- Make certain depth and bevel adjusting locking levers are tight and secure before making cut.
- **⚠CAUTION** Check lower guard for proper closing before each use. If saw is accidently dropped, lower guard may be bent. Raise the lower guard with Retracting Handle or Lower Guard Lift Lever to make sure it moves freely and does not touch the blade or any other part in all angles and depths of cut. Do not operate saw if lower guard does not move freely and close instantly.
- **⚠WARNING** Be aware that kickback can occur at any time. (See page 4 on Kickback).
- When operating the saw, keep the cord away from the cutting area and position it so that it will not be caught on the work piece during the cutting operation.
- Keep second hand on auxiliary handle or motor housing, not near blade. Do not attempt to remove cut material when blade is moving.
- Always observe that the lower guard is in the blade covering position before placing saw down on bench or floor.
- **⚠WARNING** It is important to support the work properly and to hold the saw firmly to prevent loss of control which could cause personal injury. Figures on pages 6 and 7 illustrate typical hand support of the saw.

Double Insulated Tools

Double Insulated Tools With Two-Prong Plugs

Your Master Mechanic tool is equipped with a two wire cord and two prong plug which can be used in standard 120 Volt A.C. outlets.

No grounding of the tool is necessary. The housing is a dielectric material. This helps protect you in case of failure of the standard functional insulation within the electrical system. Use only identical replacement parts when service is required.

⚠WARNING Use of damaged cords can shock, burn or electrocute.

Extension Cords

Extension Cords

Replace damaged or worn cords immediately. The table shows the correct size to use, depending on cord length and nameplate amperage rating of tool. If in doubt, use the next heavier gauge. An undersized cord will cause a drop in line voltage, resulting in loss of power and over-heating. **NOTE:** The smaller the gauge number, the heavier the cord.

(Extension Cords are available)

Recommended Minimum Gauge for Cord Extensions for Portable Electric Tools.

Wire Gauge Chart A.W.G.					
Name Plate Amps.	120V 240V	Cord Length in Feet 25 50	50 100	100 200	150 300
5-6		18	16	14	12
6-8		18	16	12	10
8-10		18	14	12	10
10-12		16	14	10	8
12-14		16	12	10	8

Operating Instructions

Attaching The Blade

Always disconnect the plug from power source before making any adjustments on any part of the saw.

1. Remove blade stud (turn counter-clockwise) and outer washer. If the shaft turns while attempting to loosen the stud, remove the wrench that is stored in the foot of saw (see Fig. 9), place wrench on stud and strike wrench counter-clockwise to jar stud loose.

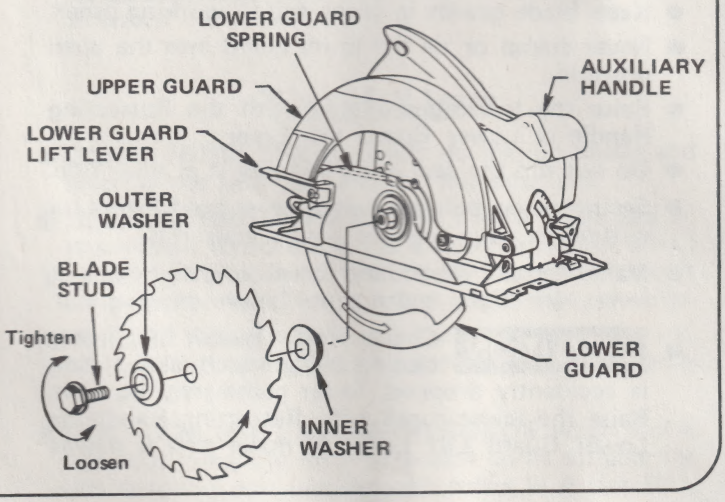
2. Retract the lower guard all the way up into the upper guard. While retracting the lower guard, check operation and condition of the lower guard spring.

3. Make sure the saw teeth and arrow on the blade point in the same direction as the arrow on the lower guard.

4. Slide blade through slot in the foot and mount it against the inner washer on the shaft. Be sure the large diameter of the inner and outer washers lay flush against the blade.

5. Replace outer washer by aligning flats on washer and shaft. Replace blade stud and tighten finger tight.

6. Place the blade on a piece of scrap wood. Hold the saw securely by the upper guard (teeth imbedded in wood) and TIGHTEN BLADE STUD 1/8 TURN WITH THE WRENCH PROVIDED, after running down finger tight. Use the piece of wood in the same manner when removing the blade.



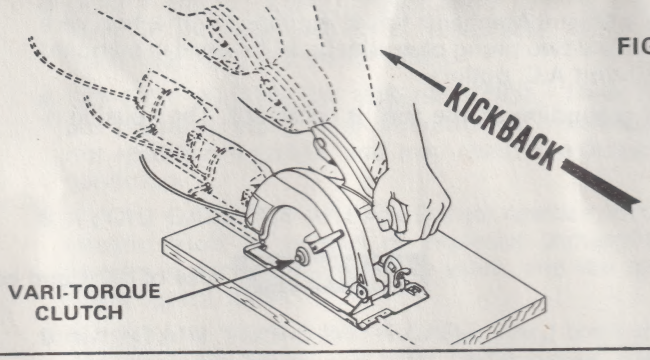
Kickback

⚠WARNING This is the tendency of the saw to lift and back out of the work piece when the blade binds or encounters excessive resistance. Using a dull blade or improperly supported work will increase the tendency for KICKBACK. Be aware, KICKBACK can occur at any time. Proper setting of the Vari-Torque Clutch combined with firm handling of the saw will allow you to control KICKBACK, (Fig. 2).

Vari-Torque Clutch

This clutching action is provided by the friction of the outer washer against the blade and permits the blade shaft to turn when the blade encounters excessive resistance. When the blade stud is properly tightened (as described above in No. 5 and 6 of Attaching The Blade), the blade will slip when it encounters excessive resistance, thus reducing unnecessary motor overload and saw KICKBACK. One setting may not be sufficient for cutting all materials. If excessive blade slippage occurs, tighten the blade stud a fraction of a turn more (less than 1/8 turn). OVERTIGHTENING THE BLADE STUD NULLIFIES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLUTCH.

FIG. 2



Blade Guards

The upper and lower guards are for your protection. Keep them clean and free of obstructions on the inside and outside. Make sure the lower guard operates properly before each cut (snaps back instantly and rests against rubber stop). DO NOT USE THE SAW IF THE LOWER GUARD IS NOT WORKING PROPERLY. Never grasp the lower guard anywhere other than the Retracting Handle or Guard Lift Lever.

Disconnect the plug from power source. Periodically remove the blade and clean the upper and lower guards. Check the operation and condition of the lower guard spring. If it is not operating properly, have it replaced. Should the lower guard operate slowly, or sluggishly due to gummy deposits, or a buildup of caked up debris, clean the hub area with kerosene and wipe it dry, or blow it clean with compressed air.

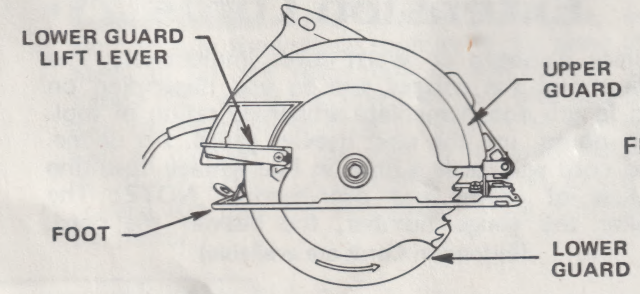
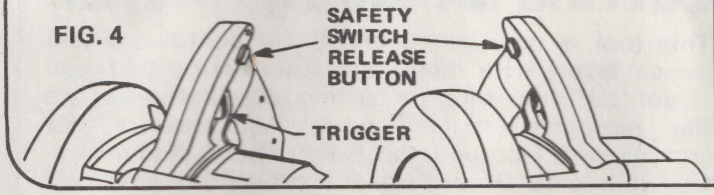


FIG. 3

Safety Switch

The safety switch is designed to prevent accidental starts. To operate safety switch press the release button with your thumb on either side of handle to disengage the lock, then pull the trigger (Fig. 4). When the trigger is released the button will engage the safety switch automatically, and the trigger will no longer operate. (See Switch & General Cuts on page 6.)

FIG. 4



90° Cutting Angle Check

Disconnect plug from power source. Check for 90° (Fig. 5). If blade is not 90° to foot, loosen bevel adjustment lever and turn alignment screw (Fig. 6) clockwise or counter-clockwise until you reach 90°.

FIG. 5

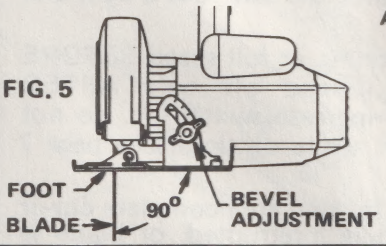
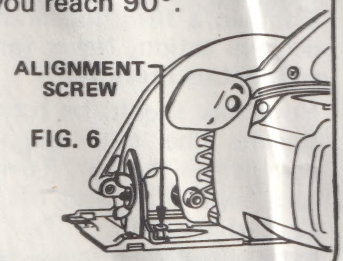


FIG. 6



Line Guide

For a straight 90° cut, use right side of notch in the foot. For 45° bevel cuts, use the left side (Fig. 7). The cutting guide notch will give an approximate line of cut. Make sample cuts in scrap lumber to verify actual line of cut. This will be helpful because of the number of different blade types and thicknesses available. To ensure minimum splintering on the good side of the material to be cut, face the good side down. To further improve accuracy, Adjustable Line Guide is available as accessory (not-included).

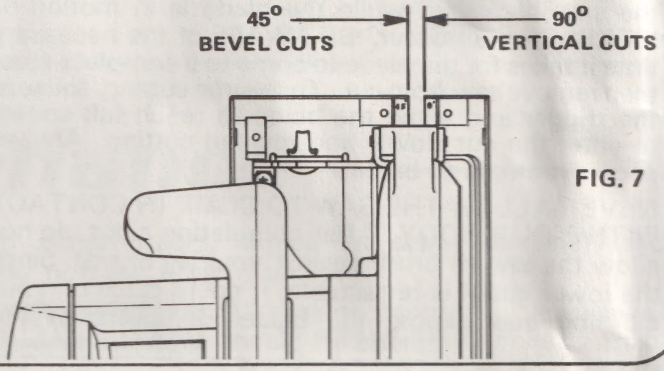


FIG. 7

Bevel Adjustment

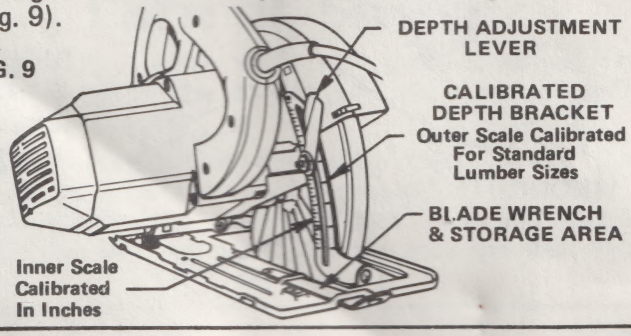
Disconnect plug from power source. The foot can be adjusted up to 45° by loosening the bevel adjustment knob at the front of the saw. Align the desired angle on calibrated quadrant and tighten. (Fig. 8).

FIG. 8

Depth Adjustment

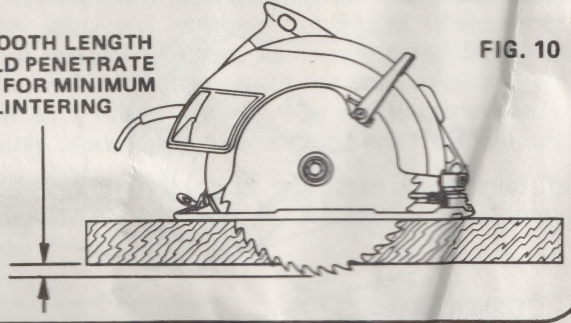
Disconnect plug from power source. Loosen the depth adjustment lever located between the guard and handle of saw. Hold the foot down with one hand and raise or lower saw by the handle. Align indicator to desired setting on calibrated depth bracket and tighten lever, (Fig. 9).

FIG. 9



Not more than one tooth length of the blade should extend below the material to be cut, for minimum splintering (Fig. 10). Any depth beyond one tooth length can be used if splintering is no problem.

FIG. 10



Switch & General Cuts

Always hold the saw handle with one hand and the auxiliary handle or motor housing with the other. Maintain a firm grip and operate the switch with a decisive action. Never force the saw. Use a light and continuous pressure.

Your saw should be running at full speed BEFORE starting the cut, and turned off only AFTER completing the cut. To increase switch life, do not turn switch on and off while cutting. (See page 7 Care of Switch).

⚠WARNING When making an incomplete cut or cutting is interrupted, or blade is binding or saw is stalling; release the trigger immediately and hold the saw motionless in the material until the blade comes to a complete stop. Never attempt to remove the saw from the work or pull the saw backward while the blade is in motion or KICKBACK may occur. BE AWARE of the necessary time it takes for the blade to come to a complete stop, then remove saw from cut. To resume cutting, squeeze the trigger and allow the blade to reach full speed, re-enter the cut slowly and resume cutting. Always secure material to be cut.

NEVER ALLOW THE SAW TO COME IN CONTACT WITH YOUR BODY. After completing a cut, do not allow the saw to brush against your leg or side. Since the lower guard is retractable, it could catch on your clothing and expose the blade. Be aware of the necessary blade exposures that exist in both the upper and lower guard areas.

When cutting across the grain, the fibers of the wood have a tendency to tear and lift. Advancing the saw slowly minimizes this effect. For a finished cut, a cross cut blade or miter blade is recommended.

Cutting Masonry / Metal:

This tool is not recommended for continuous and general usage with metal or masonry cut-off wheels. If you use your saw for cutting these materials, use the appropriate cut-off wheel and washers that comply with Occupational Safety Health Administration standards. Do not use any cut-off wheel beyond its safe speed.

When cutting masonry, do not cut at a depth of more than 1/4 inch. Make successive passes to achieve desired depth. Apply a light forward pressure. Do not overload motor. Disconnect plug from power source and clean dust from air vents frequently. Dust mask and goggles are recommended. Metal cutting is done at full depth.

⚠WARNING When cutting masonary materials, the lower guard may become sluggish. Clean guards frequently to assure a rapid return.

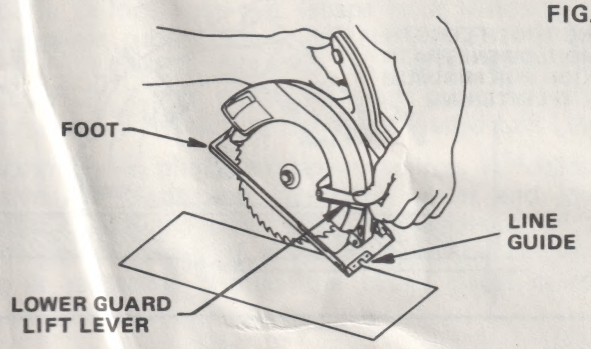
⚠WARNING Because of sparks, do not use near flammable materials or liquids. ALWAYS USE SAFETY GOGGLES.

Pocket Cuts

Disconnect the plug from the power source before making cutting depth adjustment. Set depth adjustment according to material to be cut. Tilt saw forward with cutting guide notch lined up with guide line you've drawn (Fig. 11). Raise the lower guard, using the retracting handle or guard lift lever.

With the saw tilted forward and the blade clearing, but almost touching the material to be cut, start the motor. Gradually lower the back end of the saw using the front end of the foot as the hinge point. When the foot rests flat on the surface being cut, move the saw to the end of your cut. Release the trigger and allow the blade to come to a complete stop before you lift the saw from the cut. When starting each new pocket cut, repeat this procedure. Never pull the saw backwards KICKBACK may occur. Turn the saw around and finish the cut in the normal manner. If corners of your pocket cut are not completely cut through, use a jig saw or small hand saw to complete.

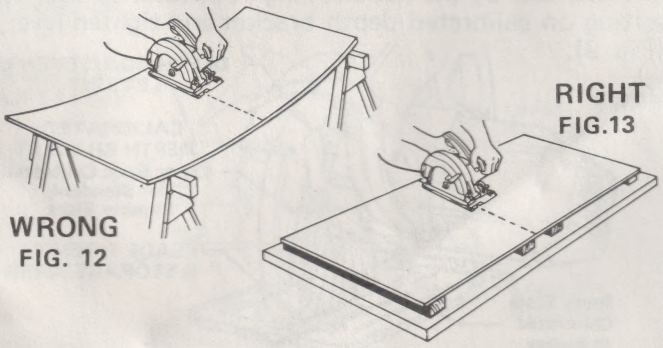
FIG. 11



Cutting Large Sheets

Large sheets and long boards sag or bend, depending on support. If you attempt to cut without leveling and properly supporting the piece, the blade will tend to bind, causing KICKBACK and extra load on the motor. (Fig. 12).

Support the panel or board close to the cut, as shown in Fig. 13. Be sure to set the depth of the cut so that you cut through the sheet or board only and not the table or work bench. The two-by-fours used to raise and support the work should be positioned so that the broadest sides support the work and rest on the table or bench. Do not support the work with the narrow sides as this is an unsteady arrangement. If the sheet or board to be cut is too large for a table or work bench, use the supporting two-by-fours on the floor and secure.



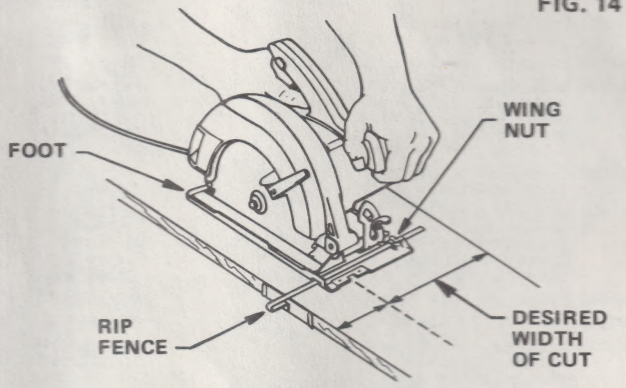
WRONG
FIG. 12

RIGHT
FIG.13

Rip Cuts

The combination blade provided with your saw is for both cross cuts and rip cuts. Rip cuts are often long, slim cuts that are easy to do with a rip fence. (Fig. 14). A bevel cut can also be made with the rip fence attached. Rip Fence available as accessory (not-included).

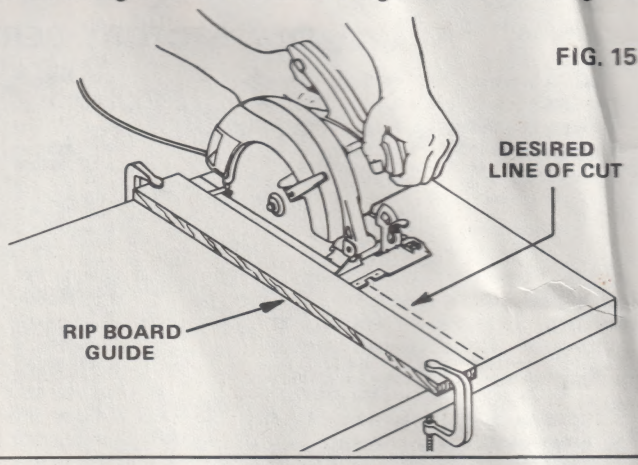
FIG. 14



Rip Board Guide

When rip cutting large sheets, the rip fence may not allow the desired width of cut. Clamp a straight piece of 1" lumber to the sheet as a guide (Fig. 15). Use the right side of the foot against the board guide.

FIG. 15



Maintenance

Care of Saw

After each use: Disconnect the power plug from the outlet, remove the blade and inner washer and wipe deposits of dust from the housing and guards. Check operation and condition of lower guard spring—it should be securely attached and close the guard instantly. The cord and the tool should be wiped occasionally to prevent deterioration from oil and grease.

⚠CAUTION Certain cleaning agents and solvents damage plastic parts. Some of these are: gasoline, carbon tetrachloride, chlorinated cleaning solvents, ammonia and household detergents that contain ammonia. Avoiding use of these and other types of cleaning agents minimizes the probability of damage.

To keep your tool in proper working condition after heavy or extended use, it's wise to return your tool to the nearest Skil Service Center for the following.

- Brushes replaced.
- Parts cleaned and inspected.
- Relubricated with fresh lubricant.
- Electrical system tested.
- All repairs.

Care of Switch

Operate the switch with firm, decisive action. To increase switch life, do not turn the switch on and off while cutting.

Depending upon use, the switch may not last the life of the saw. If the switch should fail in the "off" position, the saw may not start. If it should fail while the saw is running, the saw may not shut off. If either occurs, unplug the saw immediately and do not use until repaired.

⚠WARNING All repairs, electrical or mechanical, should be attempted only by trained repairmen. Contact the nearest Skil Factory Service Center, or Authorized Skil Service Station or other competent repair service. Use only Skil replacement parts, any other may create a hazard.

Care of Blades

A dull or damaged blade slows the speed of cutting and places a heavy load on your saw motor, and can cause Kickback. Keep extra blades on hand so that you always have sharp, efficient blades ready to replace a dull or damaged one. Always use blades with correct size holes. Never use defective or incorrect blade washers or bolts. Remove all nails before cutting, hitting a nail while cutting seriously damages the blade. If this happens, stop cutting, unplug the saw and replace the blade before continuing.

Blades become dull even from cutting regular lumber. If you find yourself forcing the saw forward to cut instead of just guiding it through the cut, chances are the blade is dull and should be replaced.

When cleaning gum and wood pitch from blade, unplug the saw and remove the blade. Remember, blades are designed to cut, so handle carefully. Wipe the blade with kerosene or similar solvent to remove the gum and pitch. Unless you are experienced in sharpening blades, we recommend you do not try.

⚠WARNING The use of any other accessories not specified in this manual may create a hazard.

Master Mechanic tools can be serviced at the following Authorized Skil Factory Service Centers.

SKIL FACTORY SERVICE CENTERS

ALABAMA Birmingham, 2721 Green Springs Highway 35209 . . . . . (206) 942-9651

ARIZONA Phoenix, 1710 E. McDowell Rd. 85006 . . . . . (602) 254-1165

ARKANSAS Little Rock, 1303 W. Markham 72201 . . . . . (501) 374-1911

CALIFORNIA Anaheim, 1290 N. Grove 92806 . . . . . (714) 630-3244
San Francisco, 2285 Palou Ave. 94124 . . . . . (415) 285-0330
Fresno, 1571 N. Maple 93703 . . . . . (209) 252-2879
Los Angeles, 5455 E. Washington Blvd. 90040 . . . . . (213) 685-6760
Concord, 1170 Burnett Ave., Suite D 94520 . . . . . (415) 827-1427
Sacramento, 3000 Q Street 95816 . . . . . (916) 451-8473
San Diego, 7330 Opportunity Rd., Suite E 92111 . . . . . (619) 268-8335
Santa Clara, 2130 DeLaCruz Blvd. 95050 . . . . . (408) 727-9444
Van Nuys, 16201 Victory Blvd. 91406 . . . . . (818) 994-8896

COLORADO Denver, 678 Bryant St. 80204 . . . . . (303) 893-5123

CONNECTICUT Rocky Hill, 2122 Silas Deane Hwy. 06067 . . . . . (203) 527-4153

FLORIDA Jacksonville, 1628 Hendricks Ave. 32207 . . . . . (904) 398-0728
North Miami 8049 N.W. 66th St. 33166 . . . . . (305) 592-2377
Orlando, 2605 S. Orange Ave. 32806 . . . . . (305) 843-5642
Tampa, 5135 W. Cypress St. 33607 . . . . . (813) 872-0271

GEORGIA Atlanta, 5717 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. 30341 . . . . . (404) 452-8192

HAWAII Honolulu, 3069 Ualena St. 96819 . . . . . (808) 836-0404

ILLINOIS Chicago (North), 5001 N. Elston Ave. 60630 . . . . . (312) 286-6760
Chicago (South), 3259 W. Columbus Ave. 60652 . . . . . (312) 436-1555
Addison, 608 W. Lake St. 60101 . . . . . (312) 543-8660

INDIANA Indianapolis, 3817 S. East Street 46227 . . . . . (317) 787-8297

IOWA Des Moines, 2430 Hubbell 50317 . . . . . (515) 265-3275

KANSAS Overland Park, 7805 Frontage Road 66204 . . . . . (913) 381-3883

KENTUCKY Louisville, 2501 Crittenden Dr. 40217 . . . . . (502) 636-2835

LOUISIANA New Orleans, 3501 Tchoupitoulas St. 70115 . . . . . (504) 899-6309

MARYLAND Baltimore, 6834 Harford Rd 21234 . . . . . (301) 254-8988
College Park, 9925 Rhode Island Ave. 20740 . . . . . (301) 474-5510

MASSACHUSETTS Boston, 190 N. Beacon St. 02135 . . . . . (617) 254-4560

MICHIGAN Detroit, 26111 W. Eight Mile Rd. 48240 . . . . . (313) 535-1919
Grand Rapids, 40 44th St. S.W. 49508 . . . . . (616) 538-5060

MINNESOTA Minneapolis, 2539 Nicollet Ave. 55404 . . . . . (612) 872-0608

MISSOURI St. Louis, 4103 Papin 63110 . . . . . (314) 535-7424

NEVADA Las Vegas, 3720 S. Valley View 89102 . . . . . (702) 871-1112
Reno/Sparks, 990 Packer Way 89431 . . . . . (702) 358-1165

NEW JERSEY Edison, 6 Kilmer Court 08817 . . . . . (201) 572-0875
Hillside, 611 U.S. Hwy. No. 22 07205 . . . . . (201) 686-6350

NEW MEXICO Albuquerque, 3320 Candelaria Dr. N.E. 87107 . . . . . (505) 884-1299

NEW YORK Buffalo, 88 Benbro Drive 14225 . . . . . (716) 681-2500
Huntington Sta., 673 E. Jericho Turnpike 11746 . . . . . (516) 423-2100
Jamaica, 153-25 Hillside Avenue 11432 . . . . . (718) 297-1919
Manhattan, 75 Varick Street 10013 . . . . . (212) 226-7630
E. Syracuse, 601 W. Manlius St. 13057 . . . . . (315) 437-3435

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FULL NINETY (90) DAY WARRANTY OF PORTABLE ELECTRIC TOOLS (FREE TOOL REPLACMENT)
Any Master Mechanic Portable Electric Tool, manufactured by Skil Corporation, (except those used in commercial and/or rental service) which does not perform satisfactorily due to defects in workmanship or materials will be replaced free of charge if returned to the dealer, from whom purchased, within ninety days of purchase date.

When a defective product is returned for replacement, proof of purchase is required and all original equipment packaged in the initial purchase must be returned with the product. Free product replacement of kits will be limited to replacement of the basic product only. This warranty does not apply to accessories.

This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state.

This warranty applies only to Portable Electric Tools sold within the United States of America, Canada, Bermuda, and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

LIMITED ONE-YEAR WARRANTY OF PORTABLE ELECTRIC TOOLS
Master Mechanic warrants for one year from the date of purchase all Master Mechanic Portable Electric Tools manufactured by Skil Corporation which does not perform satisfactorily due to defects caused by faulty material or workmanship. Our obligation assumed under this warranty is limited to the repair or replacement of parts, without charge, which are defective and which have not been misused, carelessly handled, or defaced by repairs made or attempted by others.

The complete product must be returned, transportation prepaid, to any Skil Factory Service Center or Authorized Service Station. A listing of Factory Service Centers is packed with each Master Mechanic product. This warranty does not apply to accessories.

This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state.

This warranty applies only to Portable Electric Tools sold within the United States of America, Canada, Bermuda, and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

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